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ABSTRACT

City schools must infuse strength into the young which is equal to the malignant forces which threaten their young lives and future happiness. Effective comprehensive planning must begin with an honest estimate of the desired output. Title I and Model Cities are two parallel programs sponsored by the Federal Government which seek to give help to the poor and the socially disadvantaged in the inner cities. Changes in the educational process are brought about by programs designed to engage community involvement, the introduction of early reading experience into kindergarten, compensatory education for all children in need of it, and programs to improve neighborhoods. While these two programs parallel each other, it is necessary that services are not duplicated or counter-productively competitive. State and Federal agencies must be ready to assist communities requesting aid or consultation, and the efforts of State and Federal offices should be fully coordinated. (Author/SB)

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A FRESH LOOK AT URBAN EDUCATION*

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There is a message one sees nowadays on posters and plaques and subway trains. It says, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." I find this message cheering and vaguely reassuring, although I must admit that reflections on the logic make me wonder why. I suppose it's just that most of us are susceptible to the suggestion that we can take a new, fresh look at things and that they will look better.

This meeting should be a fresh look at urban education. I hope that after these sessions of intensive new looking, things will look a great deal better.

We are gathered here to consider all the means the greatest cities of a great nation can bring to bear against one of the cruelest conundrums our society is facing. This is: "Can city schools infuse strength into the young not only equal to the malignant forces which threaten their young lives and future happiness, but a new strength of citizenry that will restore the cities as the great and beautiful centers of civilization?"

This may be a somewhat more ambitious subject than you expected at a Title I/Model Cities comprehensive planning conference, but I submit that effective comprehensive planning must begin with an honest estimate of the desired output.

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In this case we are talking about the output of city school systems and thus the capabilities of the people who must live with and unsnarl some of the most difficult problems our society has created. Output for education means first the fulfillment of human beings and secondly the fulfillment of social and economic needs.

Title I and Model Cities are more than just two ways the Federal Government is seeking to give help to the poor and the socially disadvantaged in the inner cities. Both efforts seek to change the conditions which have trapped some Americans --- Model Cities by giving inner city residents a stronger voice in the cities' management, and Title I by assuring that the inner city residents will not be shut out of the city's or the Nation's life for lack of education.

Except in the convoluted process we call government, it is hard to imagine these efforts as separate systems at all. Schools are a basic concern of everyone involved in city life and the schools must provide the skills which keep the city live and effective. But, moreover, schools must bring dignity and a useful life to the learner.

The intertwining of Title I and Model Cities is evident on a more immediate level. In the first place we are concerned with the same people. I realize that in many Model Cities there may be differences in the specific target populations for each program, but the fact that the programs overlap in far more

neighborhoods than they diverge is a clear indication that both are seeking to serve the same populations.

Another parallel can be seen in the emphasis each program puts on citizen participation. Although reached by different roads, both Model Cities and Title I now require citizen advisory councils to take part in the planning and implementation of programs. I would encourage all of you, in the interests of comprehensive planning, to examine all the ways these parallel citizen groups might be brought into closer communication and coordination. I suggest, for example, a regularized liaison through joint membership of one or more individuals, if not informal membership, at least as welcome observers for purposes of communication.

I do not recommend this in the interests of efficiency. Quite possibly efficiency in citizen involvement means getting more rather than fewer citizens into the policy influencing process. But comprehensive planning requires that anybody considering the possible benefits of a change in the education process examine that change in the perspective of the entire school system, not simply a part of it. The introduction of early reading experience into kindergarten, for example, doesn't just mean a happier, busier morning for the little folks. It is an acceleration of an essential intellectual process that begins in kindergarten and endures throughout the whole of education, the whole of life, really, changing the system as it goes.

Changes in any part of the education program affect all the other parts. And we are learning that these effects do not begin or end at the school district boundaries: changes in the community bear upon the schools and vice versa. We have recognized, especially as we have sought to operate Title I, that inner city life burdens children with a disproportionate number of educational disadvantages, and this gathering today is committed to improving both the community conditions and the schools. My point is that we should be constantly aware that we are engaged in programs which directly and inescapably affect each other, for better or worse, and are inescapably mutually dependent.

Both Model Cities and Title I discerned and tried to do something about an injustice the courts are just now articulating - that of scaling government services to the "worth" of the neighborhood served. In the coming fiscal year, school systems seeking Title I funds will be required by law to show that they are putting as much effort into education in schools in poor neighborhoods as they are into the schools attended by the more affluent. Thus, we will have data on school systems quite similar to the base data on other community services required by a Model Cities program. In many school districts this will mean that children may begin receiving real compensatory education for the first time in the scale which the statutes intended. In some school systems Title I funds in the past

have, in effect, only been off-setting the discriminatory deficit that had been there. What Title I is supposed to do, of course, is give schools serving disadvantaged students additional resources to overcome their environmental and educational deprivation so that they can come closer to our stated but infrequently realized goal of truly equal opportunity. Therefore, Title I necessarily commands: more than equal.

Thus, both Model Cities and Title I seek to assure that inner city residents get a fair share of the community's services to begin with, so that the additional Federal assistance can be used effectively to change conditions, not just patch them up. We call this comparability and after two years of urging, persuading and monitoring, we will, starting in July 1972, have the law to back it up.

It is often pointed out that Model Cities' funds are particularly effective because they are flexible, also a parallel characteristic of Title I. Title I funds are apportioned by formula, but a school district has wide latitude in determining how these funds will be used so long as it can be shown that the service provided will improve the child's chances to benefit from school. In practice, this latitude has encompassed a wide range of services as long as concrete educational benefits could be anticipated. And many proposed

uses of Title I money have been denied, because no such benefit was apparent.

When two such wide-ranging programs as Model Cities and Title I are serving the same neighborhood, it is important to be sure that the funds are not dissipated in efforts to supply services that are duplicative, or counter-productively competitive. There have been cases, for instance, of Model Cities and Title I summer programs competing wearily for attendance when instead through thought-ful planning they might have been complementary elements of a truly exhiliarating summer experience for the young people.

Although the uses of Title I funds are flexible, the supply is not. Money used for auxiliary services, such as medical aid, nutrition or clothing, reduces the amount that can be used for direct educational assistance such as more specially trained teachers, family counseling, special materials, tutoring, paraprofessional staff, and so forth.

In fact it seems clear that even though Model Cities and Title I have many parallels and obvious points of common cause in their support of urban education, in reality each accomplishes <u>less</u> than it might to the extent that the efforts are not bound together in systematic planning and a consciously implemented program of partnership. Unfortunately there appears to be no natural law that a Federal dollar set in motion by Congress must therefore unvaryingly come to rest at the point

of greatest need. Rather it takes constant effort by all of us to see that the way of Federal aid is kept free of obstacles, hazards, and bureaucratic brambles. I believe we have become fairly adept at protecting it against the old highwaymen such as self-service, greed, sloth, and fraud, but still we must work constantly to free Federal aid from the clammy grip of habit - doing things in ways that have become automatic and comfortable to us. I constantly encourage the OE staff in Washington to welcome the adventurous and facilitate the turn-around, and above all practice humaneness. These admonitions have particular relevance to our administration of Title I, where clearly the old habits are not good enough.

Certainly none of us can be comfortable with the condition of urban education today. The cities' inability to meet the rising costs of not only education, but also the other urban services --- police, health, fire, welfare, transportation, environment --- from the traditional property tax sources is a matter of deep concern to the highest councils of this Administration, starting with President Nixon and Secretary Richardson. Dynamic remedies are being proposed and sharpened at this very moment. Yet improved financing alone will not remedy the fact that the education we are now offering is apparently of little interest or usefulness to a third or more of the students in many inner city schools. These are the boys and girls in their early teens with no place in the world to go but who nevertheless

choose not to go to school. I noticed a recent news item describing the need to double the number of truant officers in one of our big cities because of the enormous absentee rate in junior and senior high schools. Truant officers, I must admit, may once have had their uses. But until the schools become happy and rewarding places, no number of truant officers can keep the disenchanted young in school. Nor should they try.

The dropouts are a burning concern to everyone who wishes to restore life to the cities, with approximately 850,000 leaving last year. But we should also be concerned with those young people who rather than drop out are willing to accept school as a tiresome place to serve time for 12 years in order to receive a "general curriculum" diploma. With these young people, our failure is not so simple as our failure to retain the dropout. Indeed, maybe worse, for we may have set in motion human beings so dulled by institutional boredom as to never recover an interest in learning. We have hoodwinked them into accepting the watery general course as a substitute for the occupational or academic education they have a right to. The dropout has at least discovered our fallacy and shown his contempt for our general diploma.

Who, then, are the successful students in the inner city schools? They are the ones who leave school with options; they

can think in terms of a future and choose their direction. It is the job of the school to prepare students, yes, all students, to make those choices confidently and realistically according to what is important to them as individuals. We hold that given a true and credible circumstance in which the young person, even at age 6 or 7, knows, really knows and deeply believes he can influence his own destiny, that the schools serving the disadvantaged can flower as the children in them flower. I am speaking, of course, of Career Education --- but that is a subject for another day.

To bring about this credible circumstance is a significant undertaking for educators under any conditions and doubly challenging for those serving students whose lives are burdened with uncertainty and disappointment. Educators in the inner city cannot limit their consciousness and their professional engagement to the classroom. They must be aware of and engaged in the city itself and how it affects their students, because in the children's environment they will find those vital keys to education, those things which stimulate and attract and inspire imagination and wonder, as well as those crippling conditions of poverty and ugliness which defeat a child's hope before hope springs.

Educators must be concerned with the whole renewal of the whole community if they are to serve the community's children. Where Model Cities is engaged in programs to improve neighborhoods,

it should have the systematic participation and firm support of teachers, principals, and superintendents in the process. And school people, if they are true to their calling, must be willing and eager to join hands with Model Cities counterparts in mutual and trusting support.

I would like to point out, probably not for the first time at this meeting, that the Office of Education has strongly supported the Model Cities Program and will continue to do so. This year about $300 million of OE formula grant funds will go to programs in Model Cities neighborhoods. Most of this is Title I money. While we in Washington do not decide whether or not these funds go to Model Neighborhoods, I believe this conference is evidence that we intend to assure that our Title I undertaking is fully coordinated with Model Cities efforts and that our powers of persuasion are felt.

In addition to the formula grants, I believe I can assure you at this time that Model Neighborhoods will benefit from about $70 million in educational programs over which the Office of Education has discretionary grant authority. This compares with $53.5 million in discretionary funds directed to Model Neighborhoods last year, an increase of over 30 percent.

The Office of Education has consistently "oversubscribed" its Model Cities commitment since FY 1969, the first year of interagency coordination with Model Cities. We expect to continue this record.

This year OE Model Cities programs, combined with $100 million of Model Cities' education funds, add up to some $470 million. This will be a significant contribution to education in each of the 147 Model Neighborhoods throughout the country, and all the more significant since these funds by their nature are largely committed to efforts to bring about change and revitalize institutions.

Secretary Richardson has declared two overarching principles which must govern the priorities of HEW. First, removing people from dependency and, second, promoting institutional change. Title I hits both squarely.

It is our charge, then, to consider here how we can bring about the changes which all of us know must take place in our cities' schools. All the essential elements are represented here --- citizens, schools, cities, States, and the Federal Government. It is time for us to agree on the kind of education our cities' schools must offer and to discover and install the teaching and learning that will <u>in this time</u> unlock the mystery of the child of poverty, often of minorities, who simply is not learning well. One of the jobs of OE is to discover good practices, evaluate them sternly, validate them, and help State and local systems install them promptly. Tomorrow morning you will hear a report from Dick Fairley, head of our Office of Compensatory Education, on some exciting and promising evidence of Compensatory programs that are working.

The main point to bear in mind as we work here is that the process we plan must be adaptable to any urban school system. It must be a method by which a local Board of Education, with citizen advice, can develop a consensus and can demand the financial and professional support it requires from the State and Federal governments. Revitalizing schools demands the active, constructive involvement of a wide range of community interests and groups as close to the neighborhood level as possible. Essentially, our task in OE is to prepare ourselves to respond with technical assistance and support to a State or city which is prepared to assess its needs and consider squarely the possible alternatives in school organization and educational programs which will best serve these needs. But the ultimate control and authority must rest with the local community.

We are now organized in Title I with a network of competent and sensitive individuals, comprising a system for affirmative action. In OE we have our Compensatory Education staff and leadership; in each State we have a Title I Coordinator and his staff. In between we have the Regional Office Title I Coordinator.

State and Federal agencies must be ready to assist communities requesting aid or consultation at any step in the process. And it is our responsibility to assure that the efforts of State and Federal offices are fully coordinated, that the burden of unraveling and delivering State and Federal resources is not visited on a community seeking developmental assistance -- seeking

to institute change.

Some of you know the efforts I have been making at the Office of Education to free the full potential of the agency to support truly comprehensive local efforts to facilitate change in local education systems. We call it <u>educational renewal</u>. An important step in a reorganization that has been underway for some weeks is the transfer of several offices responsible for the **administration** of discretionary programs into a new organization headed by the Deputy Commissioner for Development, now to be called the Deputy for Renewal. This is the essential first step in a plan to coordinate the delivery and installation of several kinds of Federal aid to education with the renewal plans of communities --- at <u>their</u> initiative, not ours.

Our plans for structure and policy changes to implement coordination within the Office of Education are extensive. But I wish to emphasize again that what is planned is a mechanism designed to respond to communities' requirements; that the desire for educational renewal, the planning and organization for educational renewal --- all must come from the community and its local board of education. Not only is local control of education a profound and historic fact of our American system, the involvement and decision making of local institutions comprise the energy source we must depend upon if educational renewal is indeed to happen.

I believe that you will be hearing a great deal about educational renewal in the future. Several Model Cities are certain to be among the first localities to qualify as renewal sites, probably due to the good track record of many of you here today who already have seen the need for, and the potential of, renewed education systems in your cities.

Title I is and will continue to be the greatest single Federal resource for improving schools in the inner city. Model Cities is the ideal mechanism for involving the community in an assessment of needs and planning for constructive action. Together, these forces, given impetus and support from the board of education and coordinated creatively at the neighborhood level, can provide the basis for a comprehensive renewal effort, with Federal and State support close at hand.

I sincerely hope that all of us in this meeting are learning what we need to know about the intricacies of each program so that we can, in our respective responsibilities, be aware at all times of the full possibilities of coordination or probable areas of conflict. I hope we are big enough and concerned enough to rise above rivalries or turfmanship. And I hope that this meeting is serving another purpose. I hope all of us will gain some glimpse of the broader horizon, of the cities of tomorrow where mingled commerce, industry, art, crafts, scholarship, and politics will offer such magnetic and exciting

attractions to the young that they will demand to be prepared to take their places as citizens as our cities of flower again.

It has been said many times, often by weary and frustrated educators, that the schools cannot do it alone. This meeting is reassuring evidence that we will not be alone, but that we will join hands with any who have the courage and the vision to go up this rocky road with us. There are enough problems to go around. And if we solve them, there will be more than enough credit to go around.

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